



# **Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan**

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Washington State Department of Health  
Office of Risk and Emergency Management

Revised May 2005

**Tab A**  
***Alerts and Notifications, to the Basic Plan***

**I. Mission**

Provide timely and accurate information to alert response personnel, decision makers, the emergency management system, and local officials about serious emerging events that come to the attention of the department.

**II. Purpose**

- A. To provide guidance to DOH staff who learn of emerging events that are having (or which will likely have) a significant impact on the public health and/or medical systems in Washington.
- B. To notify local health jurisdictions, when deemed appropriate by senior management or their designee, of a public health emergency situation using the Health Alert Network (HAN) or comparable system.
- C. Nothing in this tab should be construed as superceding or interfering with other notifications that any programs customarily perform (or which they are required to perform).
- D. For notification procedures for the general public, see Appendix 5.

**III. Scope**

This tab applies to any DOH employee who becomes aware of a situation that has developed into (or is likely to develop into) an emergency.

**IV. Concept of Operations**

A. Incoming Alerts and Notifications

DOH may learn of emergency events from a variety of sources, both official and unofficial. These typically include:

- 1. Local health officials
- 2. The CDC (including HAN messages)
- 3. The state duty officer at the state EOC
- 4. Media reports

## B. Processing Alerts and Notifications

1. The decision of the DOH employee to further report information received requires the recipient to exercise good judgment. Among the factors to be considered is whether the event may:
  - a. Cause the resources of an LHJ or public health preparedness region to be overwhelmed
  - b. Result in a large number of casualties or fatalities
  - c. Result in requests for emergency assistance from DOH
  - d. Involve a facility that DOH owns or occupies
  - e. Result in media queries to the department
  - f. In the judgment of the recipient, otherwise warrant further alerting and notification of others in DOH

2. **When in doubt, the recipient of an alert or notification will notify the agency duty officer (via duty pager—number listed in DOH Emergency Phone List) and discuss whether further notifications are appropriate.**

3. The types of alerts and notifications DOH may receive or initiate can be organized as follows:

**Category A:** Bioterrorism, communicable disease emergencies, or requests for emergency laboratory services

**Category B:** Environmental health emergencies, including food or drinking water safety incidents, hazardous materials incidents, Umatilla Chemical Weapons Depot incidents  
**Category B-1:** Radiation Incidents

**Category C:** Mass casualty, mass fatality, or emergencies affecting healthcare facility safety or reliability

**Category D:** Emergencies affecting facilities DOH owns or occupies

**Category E** Changes to Homeland Security Alert Levels

**Category F** Communication emergencies

4. Attachment 1 to this Tab contains six charts showing the notification tree for each of the above types of emergencies. DOH staff are to use these charts to guide their notifications. If the person indicated by the chart cannot be reached, then the next

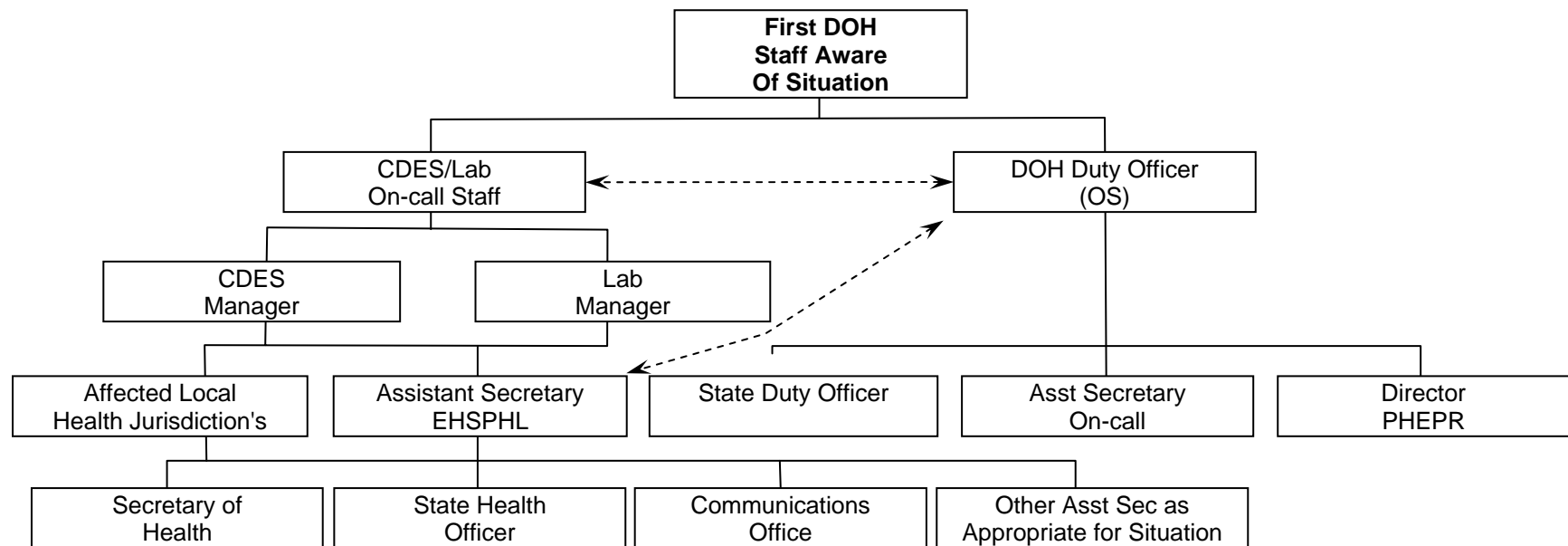
level of notifications is to be made by the person who was to notify them.

**V. Testing**

The PHEPR Director will work jointly with the Director, Emergency Preparedness Unit, to periodically conduct tests of the alert and notification system.

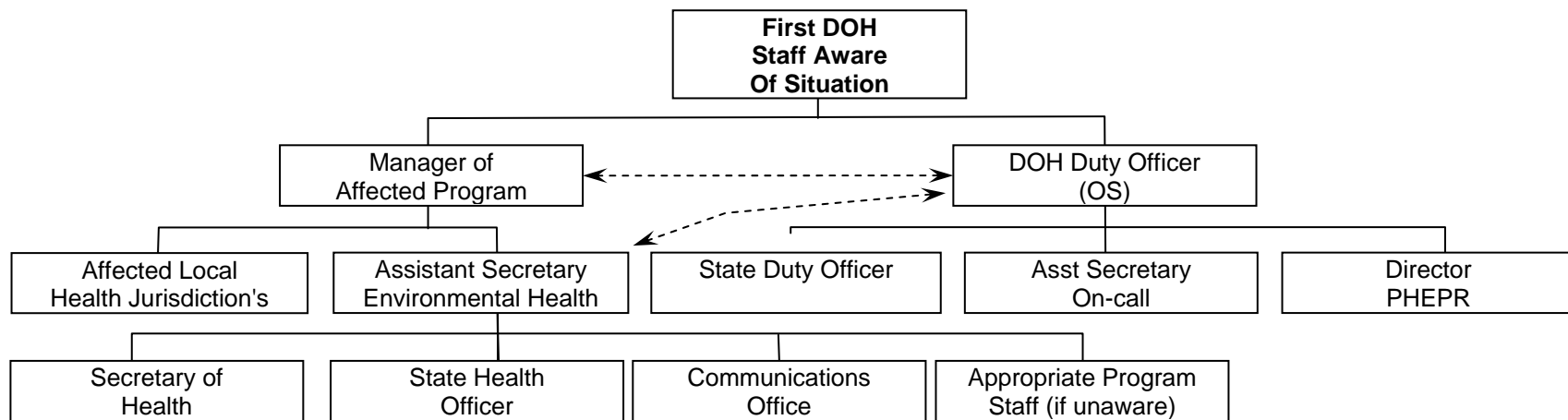
Attachment 1: Alert and Notification Flowcharts

**Tab A**  
**Attachment 1**  
**Notification Flowchart A**  
 Bioterrorism, Communicable Disease Emergency,  
 Emergency Lab Services



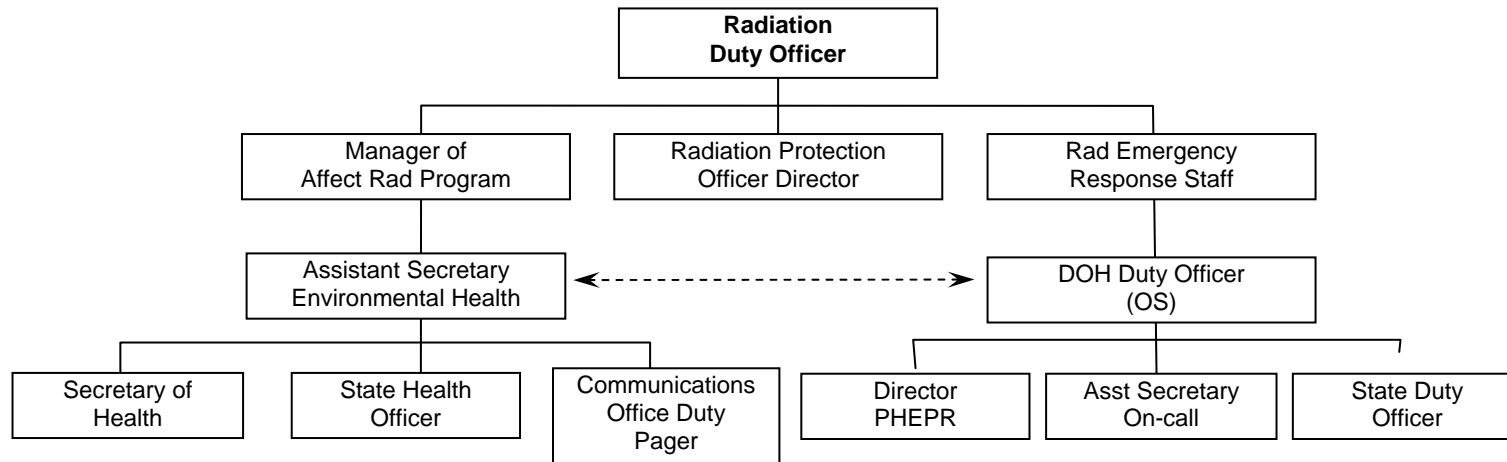
- The decision to notify persons on this chart is left to the discretion of the notifier after considering factors such as the extent and gravity of the event and actual or potential media interest.
- If not certain that the others are aware of the situation, the DOH Duty Officer, the CD/Epi/Lab, and the AS will notify each other (represented by dotted line arrows).
- If unable to contact someone on this chart, notifier will contact all persons on the next level of notification directly below that of the uncontacted individual.
- For contact information, consult latest edition of the Emergency Phone List Booklet

**Tab A**  
**Attachment 1**  
**Notification Flowchart B**  
 Environmental Health Emergencies, Including Food or  
 Drinking Water Safety Incidents, Hazardous Materials Incidents, Umatilla Chemical Weapons Depot Incidents



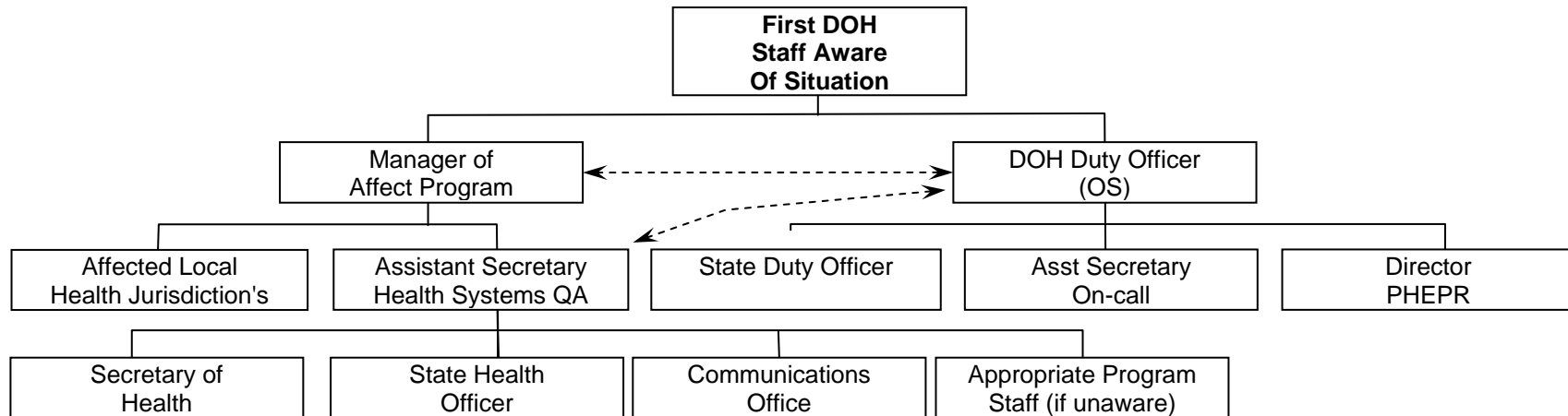
- The decision to notify persons on this chart is left to the discretion of the notifier after considering factors such as the extent and gravity of the event and actual or potential media interest.
- If not certain that the others are aware of the situation, the DOH Duty Officer, the Program Manager, and the Assistant Secretary will notify each other as appropriate (represented by dotted line arrows).
- If unable to contact someone on this chart, notifier will contact all persons on the next level of notification directly below that of the uncontacted individual.
- For contact information, consult latest edition of the Emergency Phone List Booklet

**Tab A**  
**Attachment 1**  
**Notification Flowchart B-1**  
 Radiation Incidents



- The decision to notify persons on this chart is left to the discretion of the notifier after considering factors such as the extent and gravity of the event and actual or potential media interest.
- If not certain that the others are aware of the situation, the DOH Duty Officer and the Assistant Secretary will notify each other (represented by dotted line arrows).
- If unable to contact someone on this chart, notifier will contact all persons on the next level of notification directly below that of the uncontacted individual.
- For contact information, consult latest edition of the Emergency Phone List Booklet

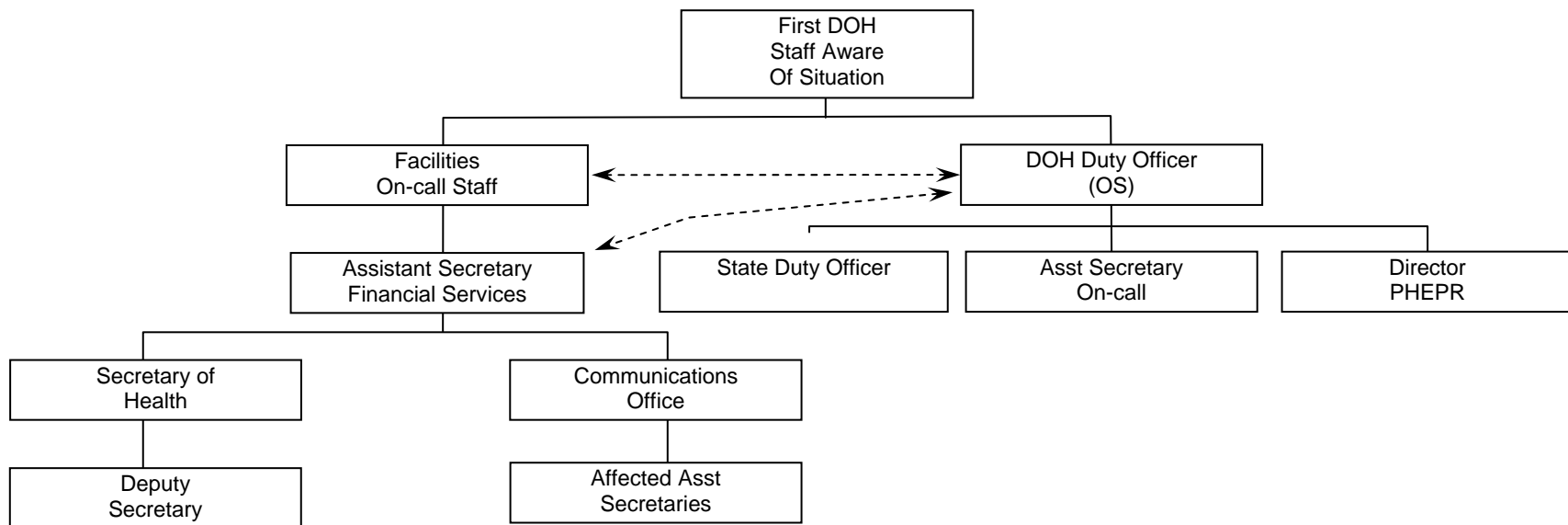
**Tab A**  
**Attachment 1**  
**Notification Flowchart C**  
 Mass Casualty, Mass Fatality, or Emergencies Affecting Healthcare  
 Facility Safety or Reliability



- The decision to notify persons on this chart is left to the discretion of the notifier after considering factors such as the extent and gravity of the event and actual or potential media interest.
- If not certain that the others are aware of the situation, the DOH Duty Officer, the Program Manager, and the Assistant Secretary will notify each other as appropriate (represented by dotted line arrows).
- If unable to contact someone on this chart, notifier will contact all persons on the next level of notification directly below that of the uncontacted individual.
- For contact information, consult latest edition of the Emergency Phone List Booklet

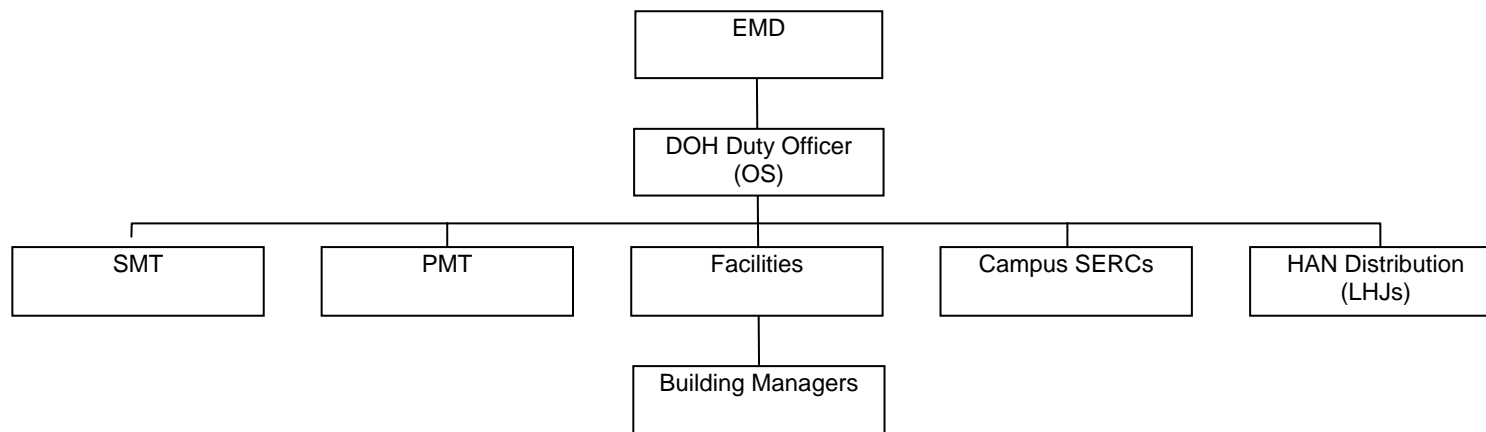


**Tab A**  
**Attachment 1**  
**Notification Flowchart D**  
 Emergencies Affecting DOH Facilities



- The decision to notify persons on this chart is left to the discretion of the notifier after considering factors such as the extent and gravity of the event and actual or potential media interest.
- If not certain that the others are aware of the situation, the DOH Duty Officer, the Program Manager, and the Assistant Secretary will notify each other as appropriate (represented by dotted line arrows).
- If unable to contact someone on this chart, notifier will contact all persons on the next level of notification directly below that of the uncontacted individual.
- For contact information, consult latest edition of the Emergency Phone List Booklet

**Tab A**  
**Attachment 1**  
**Notification Flowchart E**  
Changes in Homeland Security Alert Levels



- Alert level changes will dictate the type of notification mode used for contacting first level recipients. Email will be used unless the change warrants use of telephone or pager.
- The decision to notify persons on this chart is left to the discretion of the notifier after considering factors such as the extent and gravity of the event and actual or potential media interest.
- If not certain that the others are aware of the situation, the DOH Duty Officer, the Program Manager, and the Assistant Secretary will notify each other as appropriate.
- If unable to contact someone on this chart, notifier will contact all persons on the next level of notification directly below that of the uncontacted individual.
- For contact information, consult latest edition of the Emergency Phone List Booklet